



# Loreto Convent School

Gibraltar

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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*This policy reflects the ethos of Loreto Convent School and has been compiled and reviewed with the involvement of children, staff and Governors.*

### Introduction

Loreto Convent School is committed to providing a caring environment for all children so they can experience school life in a secure and safe environment. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur all children should be able to tell someone and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively according to these guidelines. Bullying can affect everyone, not just those directly involved but those who witness incidents. No one person or group whether child, staff or any other adult has to accept this type of behaviour.

This Policy outlines types of bullying, how bullying can be recognised and the methods used to support victims in dealing with issues as effectively as possible. However, on occasions and at our discretion, it may be necessary to deviate from the Policy, given the individual circumstances.

### Bullying can be described as:

- Deliberately hurtful behaviour usually repeated over a period of time.
- An imbalance of power which often results in a person feeling unable to defend or protect themselves.
- A conscious desire to hurt another person placing them under stress/duress.
- Bullying is action taken by one or more children with the deliberate intention of hurting another child, either physically, emotionally, verbally or by cyber bullying.

### Types of bullying

#### **Physical:-**

Punching, kicking, spitting, tripping, biting, hitting, pushing and any other uninvited physical contact.

#### **Emotional/Psychological:-**

Being deliberately unfriendly - ostracism - leaving someone out of conversation/activities, threatening gestures, tormenting, theft, hiding or damaging personal belongings, spreading rumours. Most children involved in bullying will experience emotional distress to some degree.

**Verbal:-**

Spreading rumours, name calling, sarcasm, verbal threats (including messages sent by e-mail, text, social networking). Direct calls using mobiles or landlines.

**Cyber:-**

Unacceptable use of technology to intimidate, threaten, harass or frighten typically via email, texts, social networking sites eg Facebook, mobile phone (including camera/filming facility) both on and off school premises and outside school time. Sexualised bullying. We liaise with our RGP, Child Line and Data Protection agencies who visit school to inform children and staff about the risks involved with Cyber bullying and how to deal with the issues facing this type of bullying.

**Sexual:-**

- **Gender related:** Sexually abusive comments, unwanted or inappropriate advances, gesture or contact of a sexual nature. Inappropriateness/invasion of personal space designed to threaten, humiliate or coerce. Inappropriate use of webcam/camera facilities, filming, sexting, altered images.
- **Homophobic:** Inappropriate or negative focussing on a child's sexuality or feelings about it.

**Racist:-**

Any action or remark about ethnicity, religion, culture, racist taunts, threats or gestures.

**Gifted and Talented:-**

Negative references based on perception of high level of ability or effort regarding high achievers.

**SEN & Disability:-**

- Negative stereotyping.
- Children are excluded from activity or subject to discrimination.
- Treated less favourably than others.

**2. Aims and Objectives**

- Bullying is wrong and damages individual children. We therefore do all we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.
- We aim as a school to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety.
- This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur.
- We aim to make all those connected with the school aware of our opposition to bullying, and we make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in our school.
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### 3. Friendship issues:-

- Bullying is not falling out between friends after a disagreement, quarrel or argument (though in some cases this can lead to bullying).
- Bullying behaviour is not teasing between friends without intention to cause hurt.
- Coercion / persuasion can be subtle and result in pressuring to do something they don't wish to.
- Friendships are complex and occasionally there are changes to friendship groups that can be temporary or permanent. It is worth bearing in mind that some issues experienced by children are sometimes done without deliberate intention, that is a person has not realised how damaging their comments, use of language or actions have been.

### 4. Dealing with bullying:

Instances of bullying vary immensely and are therefore dealt with on an individual basis, supported by evidence that is available. Where possible Staff will endeavour to find first-hand evidence that backs up the allegations, allowing the issue to be dealt with quickly and avoiding any further unnecessary distress for victim.

#### 4.1 Children who are or think they are being bullied should:

- Tell someone straight away 'If you want it sorted, get it reported'
- Be heard and understood
- Be proud of who they are – it's good to be an individual.
- Remember – it's not their fault.
- Try not to retaliate, this can make the situation worse.
- Be assertive and walk away.
- Be confident in the school's ability to deal with the situation.
- Keep a record of the incident.
- Be offered support during and after the incident to be helped to seek solutions and feel empowered throughout the process.

#### 4.2 Observers, witnesses and bystanders should:

- Take action, keep yourself safe, get help.
- Not stand there watching, as this makes the person being bullied feel worse. It can appear that you are siding with / encouraging the bully.
- If asked to write a statement – be honest and clear.

#### 4.3 Students who engage in bullying behaviour should :

- Be heard and understood.
- Be enabled to understand the other person's point of view or situation.
- Be helped to learn to behave in an appropriate way so no further harm is caused.
- Have learning programmes and opportunity to develop their emotional skills and knowledge.
- Be aware of any necessary sanctions that may need to be imposed working in conjunction with parent/carers.

**5. The role of the school community:**

- To challenge any behaviour considered to be of a bullying nature.
- To be clear about the anti-bullying stance the school takes.
- To celebrate the success of our anti-bullying work.
- To ensure that all members of the school community understand their role in challenging and reporting bullying incidents and the rights of every individual to feel safe.

**6. The role of the parents/carers:**

- Note any unusual behaviour and unexplained illness.
- Remain calm.
- Inform their child's class teacher immediately of any concerns.
- Advise the child not to fight back or retaliate.
- Explain to the child that the situation is not their fault.
- Reassure the child that they will be listened to and supported.
- To play their part in regulating their son/daughter's behaviour when not on school premises or in school time.
- To recognise their responsibility in minimising the impact that such behaviours have within the learning community.

**7. The role of the Headteacher:**

- To implement the school anti-bullying strategy and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy and know how to deal with incidents of bullying. The Headteacher reports to the Board of Governors about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy on request. Staff are free to report bullying at any time.
- To ensure that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this school. The Headteacher draws the attention of the children to this fact at suitable moments e.g in assemblies.
- To ensure that all staff receive sufficient training to be equipped to deal with all incidents of bullying.
- To set the school climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely. When children feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.

**8. The role of the Board of Governors:**

- To support the Headteacher in all attempts to eliminate bullying from our school. This policy makes it clear that the Board of Governors does not tolerate bullying and that any incidents of bullying that do occur are taken seriously and dealt with appropriately.
- To respond within a reasonable time to any request from a parent to investigate incidents of bullying. In all cases, the Board of Governors notifies the Headteacher and asks him/her to conduct an investigation into the case and to report back to a representative of the Board of Governors.

## **9. The role of the teacher:**

Instances of bullying vary immensely and are therefore dealt with on an individual basis, (*see point 4*) supported by evidence that is available. Where possible Staff will endeavour to find first-hand evidence that backs up the allegations, allowing the issue to be dealt with quickly and avoiding any further unnecessary distress for victim.

Teachers attend training which enables them to become equipped to deal with incidents of bullying and behaviour management.

### **9.1 Guidelines for Mediation and the teacher's role:**

- The member of staff witnessing or being told about the incident(s) should inform the victim's teacher. Bearing in mind the immediacy of certain situations, gather names of possible witnesses.
- Staff should be aware at all times of child protection issues.
- Confidentiality should not be promised.
- The child's teacher will then make a decision, as to whether the incident can be classed as bullying or not. If bullying is deemed to have taken place the incident will be discussed with the co-ordinators. Otherwise, it should be dealt with by the class teacher.

### **9.2 When interviewing the children staff will:**

- Listen objectively to what is being said.
- Encourage the children to share what they are feeling.
- Ascertain who has been involved, including bystanders.
- Discuss with the victim(s) what they would like to see happen and arrangements for the future.
- Offer coping/preventative strategies as appropriate.
- Discuss reparation/compensation if property has been damaged/destroyed.
- Set a realistic timescale for investigating and reporting back to the victim(s) if appropriate.

### **9.3 The following approaches may be used as appropriate:**

- Trying not to apportion blame, but rather approach the students in a non-confrontational manner with the emphasis on problem solving.
- Explaining you would like to talk to the child as you are aware the child has been unkind to/causing problems for (name of victim). Asking the child if they know how (name of victim) is feeling right now.
- Explaining that the bully(ies) bystanders are responsible for those feelings and this is not acceptable.
- Asking for suggestions to help the victim(s) feel better and to help solve the problem.
- If appropriate, arranging to see the child again to see how things have improved.
- Contacting the parents/carers of those children involved, if appropriate.

#### 9.4 Procedures:

- The class teacher should keep their own records of all incidents that happen in their class and that they may be aware of in the school.
- If a child is being bullied over a period of time, then, after consultation with the Headteacher, the teacher informs the child's parents.
- An anti-bullying logbook is kept in the Headteacher's office and all incidents that occur outside of lesson time, either near the school or on the children's way home or to school should be recorded in this logbook.
- If a teacher becomes aware of any bullying taking place between members of a class, this should be dealt with immediately. This could involve counselling and support for the victim being bullied (See 9.1).
- If a child is being bullied repeatedly, the teacher must inform the Headteacher and possibly the special needs coordinator. The child's parents will be invited into the school to discuss the situation. In more extreme cases where these strategies have proven ineffective, the Headteacher may contact external support agencies.

**Teachers attempt to support all children in their class and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. By praising, rewarding and celebrating the success of all children, we aim to prevent incidents of bullying.**

**Seen by Governing Body:**